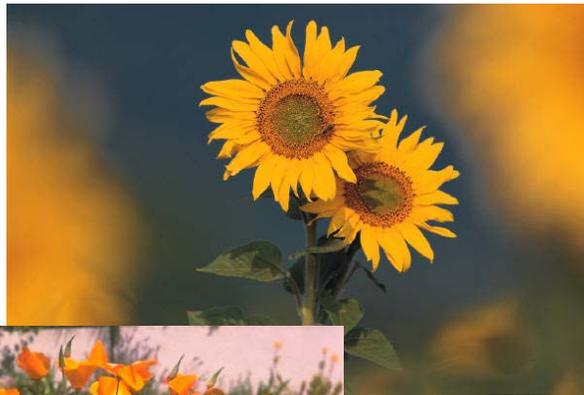


# PLANTS FOR EVERY REASON



This booklet has been made available with the Proposition 204 grant educational funds obtained by the North San Juan Fire Protection District in Nevada County, California

## **PLANTS FOR EVERY REASON**



Your property is yours- but you might consider sharing it with wildflowers, butterflies, birds and other wildlife by creating habitat such as the plants in this booklet. Our parks and forests are great places to visit and observe wildlife but fish, insects, birds, animals and plants need our help in providing habitat on private lands.

This booklet will discuss the following *plants* :

- ❖ **Plants for creating habitat**
- ❖ **Deer resistant plants**
- ❖ **Native plants**
- ❖ **Fire resistant plants**
- ❖ **Poisonous plants**

Information compiled and produced by Lesa Osterholm.  
January 2004

### References and resources:

“Fire Wise is Fire Safe”, Fire Safe Council of Nevada County  
Contact: 530-470-9193 or [www.firesafecouncilnevco.com](http://www.firesafecouncilnevco.com)

“Deer Resistant Plants for the Sierra Foothills (Zone 7)”  
“Western Nevada County Gardening Guide”  
UC Cooperative Extension Nevada County Master Gardeners  
Contact: 530-273-4563 or [www.ceplacer.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ceplacer.ucdavis.edu)

“Toxic Plants In Your Hay And Pasture”  
Mary A. Scott, D.V.M., UC Davis Veterinary Hospital, California  
[www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu](http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu)

Nevada County Resource Conservation District/  
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Contact: 530-272-3417  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) for poisonous plant and resource conservation information

# PLANTS FOR CREATING HABITAT

*Be part of the habitat solution.*



## **BUTTERFLIES AND BENEFICIAL INSECTS**

Butterflies add flashes of color and enhance the beauty of your landscaping. To provide for season long butterfly visits, choose a mix of nectar-rich species with blooming times that run from spring to fall. Butterflies require food in liquid form such as nectar from flowers and juices from extra-ripe fruits. Both annuals and perennials will work. Below is a list of some plants that do well in our area:

### ANNUALS

Cosmos  
Lantana  
Lunaria  
Marigold  
Petunia  
Verbena  
Zinnia

### PERENNIALS

Aster/ Michaelmas Daisy	Coffeeberry
Bee balm	Lavender
Black-eyed Susan	Phlox
Butterfly Bush	Purple Coneflower
Cape Plumbago	Yarrow
Catnip	
Coreopsis	

Hummingbirds are attracted to red and yellow plants although they frequently visit nectar producing flowers like many on the list above.



Having the right insects in your garden or property can keep pests and weeds to a minimum. Beneficial insects such as ladybugs, assassin bugs and praying mantises prey on insects that can harm your plants.



## **QUAIL AND PHEASANT**

A wide variety of fruit, berries and seeds from wild plants provide food for the Valley or California quail. Wild grass seeds as well as planted grains are important sources of food.

Legumes such as vetches, clovers and lupine are very desirable.

Scotch Broom also provides food for quail; however, it is an undesirable, very invasive plant and very flammable.

After creating defensible space on your property by thinning and trimming trees and brush, save a few brush piles for quail and other birds and animals. These piles serve as great habitat and food for many species.

## **BIRDS**

Birds are usually plentiful with the following plants in our area:

Blue Elderberry  
California Fuchsia  
Coffeeberry  
Pines  
Toyon  
Western Serviceberry  
Willows  
Wood's Rose



Brush piles or dead and hollow trees are valuable for wildlife. Dead trees provide homes to over 400 species of birds, mammals and amphibians. Fish, plants and fungi also benefit from dead and dying trees. Brush and dead trees can provide food, shelter and nesting sites for wildlife and will decompose naturally.

Butterflies, birds, bees and all wildlife are very vulnerable to many pesticides and other chemicals. Probably the best single thing a gardener can do for wildlife is to minimize chemical use. If you do use chemicals, always follow the directions and try not to apply when fruit or nuts are present on the plants.

## **CATTLE/ SHEEP and SIMILAR LIVESTOCK**



Cattle and sheep prefer a 50:50 mix of palatable forage grasses and legumes such as clovers and vetches. Annual Ryegrass, Blando Brome and Clovers grow well in our range soils and elevations to 3500 feet. This dryland mix is commonly referred to as the “Grass Valley Mix.”



## **HORSES**

Horses need a 75:25 ratio mix of palatable forage grasses to legumes. Horses can get serious digestive upsets if they consume too much legumes such as clover. Horses are very selective eaters and prefer ryegrass, orchard grasses, oats, timothy, alfalfa and clovers.

Contact the Nevada County Resource Conservation District, the local UC Ag Extension Office or local seed suppliers for more information.



## **DEER RESISTANT PLANTS** **(not deer proof)**

As much as we love 'em, deer can be devastating to some flowers and plants. Deer resistant plants are not deer proof. Deer are browsers and prefer shrub like plants and grasses. Deer love young, tender plants, especially the new ones just brought home from the nursery. Plants with a strong-scented fragrance are often deer resistant, like marigolds.

Fencing may be necessary to help keep the deer away from gardens and/or protect young trees and flowers from being eaten. Tall fencing ( 6 feet or higher ) or electric fence certainly helps. Deer can jump high or wide but not high and wide. Some people actually install 2 fences about 3-4' apart around their gardens and have had great success in keeping the deer out.

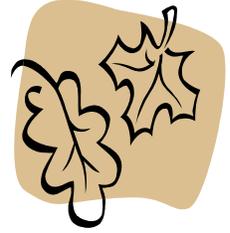
The following plants are considered “deer resistant”:

Agapanthus  
Alyssum  
Bigleaf Maple  
Blue Elderberry  
California Bay  
California Buckeye  
Crocus  
Daffodils  
Douglas Fir  
Ferns-all  
Juniperus  
Lantana  
Lavender  
Marigold  
Oregon Grape  
Pacific Madrone

Pines  
Rosemary  
Rushes  
Sage Brush  
Sages (salvia)  
Skunkbrush  
Stonecrop  
Toyon  
Tulips  
Western Rebud  
Western Spicebush  
Wild Ginger  
Wild Iris hybrids  
Yarrow  
Zinnia



# NATIVE PLANTS of CALIFORNIA



Native plants are better suited to our local soil and growing conditions and make your job much easier in establishing them on your property. They usually require less work to thrive. Native plants are not necessarily deer resistant or fire resistant plants.

Well established, mature native plants need less water and usually do not like too much summer watering. Young, native plants must have supplemental water in order to establish themselves and thrive. It may take several years before a native plant can last without supplemental water.

More and more, California native plants are disappearing from the wild. To help preserve them, you can purchase seeds or plants from nurseries that specialize in native plants. The Nevada County Resource Conservation District usually has a native plant give-away every spring, and the Nevada County Master Gardener's Spring and Fall Fests offer native plants for sale.

Remember that it's against the law to pick flowers or dig up plants on public lands. A picked flower can't set seeds to replace itself and a dug up plant most likely won't survive, so the plants are lost to everyone. Take pictures instead and preserve them!

All plants listed are suitable for Sunset Western Garden Guide Zone 7, or USDA Zone 8, with lows of 10-20 degrees Fahrenheit.

## Native annuals for sun and dry conditions:

California Poppy  
Chia  
Lupine  
Monkey Flower  
Purple Tansy  
Tidy Tipps  
Wind Poppy

## Native perennials for sun and dry conditions:

Blanket Flower  
Blue Flax  
Coyote Mint  
Delphinium  
Evening Primrose  
Horsemint  
Lupine  
Matija Poppy  
Monkey Flower  
Purple Milkweed  
Sage  
St. Catherines Lace

**Native shrubs for sun and dry conditions:**

California Barberries  
California Coffeeberry  
California Lilac  
Flannel Bush  
Hollyleaf Cherry  
Lemonade Berry, Sugar, Squaw Bush  
Monkey Flower  
Toyon  
Western Redbud

**Native trees for sun and dry conditions:**

Blue Oak  
California Black Oak  
California Buckeye  
Interior Live Oak  
Madrone

**Native bulbs for sun and dry conditions:**

Brodiaea  
Onion  
Soap Plant

**Native perennial grasses for sun and dry conditions:**

Blue Wildrye  
California Melica  
Creeping Wildrye  
Fremont Camas  
Mariposa Tulips, Globe Tulips  
Nodding Stipa  
Pine Bluegrass  
Purple Stipa  
Stonecrop

**Native annuals that will tolerate watering:**

Arroya Lupine  
Baby Blue Eyes, Five Spot  
Birds Eye  
California Bells, Chinese Lantern  
Douglas' Coreopsis  
Farewell to Spring

**Native perennials that will tolerate watering:**

Butterfly Weed	Monkey Flower
Jeffrey's Shooting Star	Golden Eyed Grass
Jimson Weed	California Blue Eyed Grass
Marsh Marigold	Hummingbird Sage
Sea Thrift	Lupine
Wooly Yarrow	Iris, Violets

**Native shrubs that will tolerate watering:**

Buttonwillow  
California Mock Orange  
California Snowdrop Bush  
Ceanothus  
Douglas Spiraea  
Gooseberry  
Manzanita  
Mt. Cream Bush  
Ninebark  
Pallid Service Berry  
Tree Anemone  
Western Chokeberry

**Native trees that will tolerate watering:**

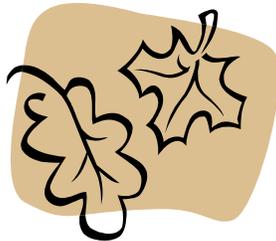
Blue Elderberry  
Box Elder  
Foothill Ash  
Fremont Poplar  
Red Elderberry  
Western Sycamore

**Native bulbs and bulb-like plants that will tolerate water:**

Bloomers Tiger Lily  
Brodiaea  
Camas  
Chocolate Lily, Yellow Bells  
Munz Iris, Bowl-Tubed  
Onion

**Native grasses that will tolerate water:**

Creeping Wildrye  
Deergrass  
Rush  
Sedge  
Slender Wheatgrass  
Tufted Hairgrass



## **FIRE RESISTANT PLANTS**

No plants are completely flame retardant. Avoid plants that have resinous, oily and waxy plant parts. Even the best fire resistant plants can become a fire hazard if not maintained. Any plant can burn during extreme fire conditions. However, there are plants that are harder to ignite, burn slower, produce less heat when burning and/or produce a shorter flame length.

Remember to create defensible space around your home and other structures. Defensible space is the area that lies between your house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the threat of fire. This space provides an opportunity for firefighters and the homeowner to safely defend a structure. This can be done by planting fire resistant, low growing plants, keeping them trimmed or pruned and keeping the area irrigated or “green”. The law requires a minimum of 30 feet around each structure and the area is greater if the home is on a slope.

**Plants to AVOID:** (these are not “fire-resistant”)

Algerian Ivy  
Bamboo  
Berry vines, especially blackberry  
Coyote Bush  
Fountain Grass  
Hopseed Bush  
Juniper  
Maiden Grass  
Mountain Misery, Bear Clover  
Muhly Grass  
Pampas Grass  
Scotch and Spanish Broom



Regardless of the type of grass and brush, keep it mowed, grazed or maintained annually. If you have trees within the defensible space, isolate the tree from other trees, remove any branches that are dead and within 10 feet of the roof or chimney. Remove all “ladder fuels” from underneath the tree. Ladder fuels are vegetation with vertical continuity that allows fire to burn from ground level up into the branches and crowns of trees. Ladder fuels are potentially very hazardous but are easy to mitigate. Be aware if you have plants from the above list.

**Refer to the Native Plant list which contains Firewise plants for Nevada County.**

## POISONOUS PLANTS

There are some plants that are poisonous to humans and some species of animals, but not to others.

**Star Thistle** is poisonous to horses, and yet cattle and goats will eat it. Cattle will only consume Star Thistle in its early stages before it goes to seed and gets its spiny thistles. At this stage, only goats seem to eat it. Star Thistle is the “**most wanted**” weed in the county-dead not alive. Weed infestation is commonly due to over-grazing. Therefore, changing your pasture management and re-seeding will help choke out Star Thistle. It's does not compete well with other grasses. Plant poisoning is preventable and the key is being able to recognize potentially poisonous plants.



### **Why are some plants poisonous?**

It is generally accepted that poisonous plants have evolved toxic components as a means of protection against predators and disease. Grazing animals are only one group of plant predators and may be, in fact, the incidental victims of toxins that are present as protection against insects and microorganisms, such as fungi. Some plants are poisonous to livestock only after they have been damaged by freezing or because they are infested with fungi that produce toxins. Make sure your fescues are endophyte free.

**Common Groundsel, Tansy Ragwort and Fiddleneck**, also called **Tarweed** or **Fireweed** causes liver damage in horses. Learn to recognize these! **Oleander** is a common shrub, yet is poisonous to horses and other livestock. It is not commonly eaten but can be found in garden trimmings, or in leaf piles. When only a small amount is ingested, it is usually fatal. Many poisonous weeds are found in hay and are eaten by accident; therefore, buy hay from reliable hay dealers and inspect your hay prior to feeding.



Common Groundsel



Tansy Ragwort

## **Ponderosa Pine**

The needles of Ponderosa Pine can cause abortion in cattle when grazing. Induced abortions generally occur in late fall to early spring, during the last trimester of pregnancy. Cattle generally graze pine needles during storms with increased snow, wind, cold and when hungry.

The toxin that causes abortion is isocupressic acid. The Ponderosa Pine is a hardy tree that is used extensively as timber. Both its dry and green

needles can cause abortion in cows. Pine needles can be made available to cattle from slash remaining after logging operations, windfalls, or dried fallen needles. Discarded Christmas trees have been known to cause abortions in cows. Lodgepole Pine, Common Juniper and Monterey Cypress also contain isocupressic acid and may also cause abortions when eaten by cattle.



## **Plants that cause mechanical injury:**



Some plants are hazardous to your animals in other ways.

These type of plants can do mechanical injury to your animals usually by cutting their gums and cheeks by sharp barbed seed heads. Star Thistle, Foxtails, Wild Barley, Wild Oats and Yellow Bristle Grass fit into this category. These grasses or weeds become embedded in skin and mucous membranes and cause pain, ulcers and infections. When this happens, animals usually stop eating, lose weight and become unthrifty looking. You can prevent injury by providing high quality forage, managing your pastures to prevent weeds and paying attention to your animal's health.

*Cockleburs can cause mechanical damage to animals.*

There are many more poisonous plants in our area. Learn to identify them.

An animal won't usually eat them unless it is extremely hungry. Just because it looks like there is vegetation in your pasture, it doesn't mean it is desirable or beneficial to the animal, and your animal could be very hungry. Contact the UC Ag Extension, Ag Commissioner's office or the Resource Conservation District for more information.

Visit the USDA poisonous plant website for pictures and more information

[www.pprl.usu.edu/](http://www.pprl.usu.edu/)



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